

ONE BAPTISM:

A DIALOGUE

SHOWING THAT

TRINE IMMERSION IS THE ONLY
GROUND OF UNION

THAT CAN BE CONSCIENTIOUSLY
OCCUPIED BY THE

LEADING RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS
OF CHRISTENDOM.

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PREFACE.

THE object of this little work is to set forth, in a lively and attractive form, the arguments and methods of reasoning usually advanced in defense of trine immersion as the only ground of union in baptism; showing the evils arising from the different and conflicting practices now in use among us; also proving that the Gospel teaches but one method, and that, amid all the conflicting theories and discords of Christendom, this one method has come down to us, voluntarily acknowledged to be valid by all the leading denominations, of both ancient and modern times.

Nearly, if not quite all the arguments, *pro* and *con*, used in this little pamphlet, have come under the writer's notice. The arguments are presented fairly and squarely, and the conclusions deduced from the existing premises are the logical consequences arising from the proper application of the truth. Trine immersion is fairly and logically shown to be the only common ground of union in baptism.

The author has chosen this form of presenting the truth, that in any other shape would not be so interesting; but, as it is here placed, in a peculiar dialogue style, the careful, and even careless reader will not likely forget the contents after a careful perusal. Of course the meetings herein mentioned are understood to be supposed meetings.

While perusing this little pamphlet, keep your mind constantly resting on the arguments produced, regardless of the denomination to which the speaker may belong.

"The worth of truth no tongue can tell,
'Twill do to buy, but not to sell."

THE AUTHOR.

ONE BAPTISM.

A DIALOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

*Proceedings of a Supposed Meeting Held in Uniontown, by the
Leading Members of Various Denominations, in order
to Adopt Measures against the Growing Evils
Arising from the Controversy about the
Action of Christian Baptism.*

GREAT difficulties having arisen in Uniontown, resulting from baptism being administered in different ways, the leading members of the various churches deemed it prudent to call a meeting, and if possible adopt measures against the growing evil. The necessary arrangements having been made, said meeting was organized by calling Mr. C. to the chair, and appointing Mr. L. secretary.

Mr. C. then arose and stated the object of the meeting as follows:

*Dear Brethren:—*Having been called to the chair, it becomes my duty to state the object of this meeting, which I will endeavor to do to the best of my ability, not, however, without some regret, knowing that the subject now before us for investigation, is a very delicate one and must be handled with much care, in order that our present deliberations may result in good.

You are aware that serious difficulties have originated and steadily been increasing in our little town during the last several years, all, more or less, resulting from baptism

being performed by no less than *four* different ways. Many of us, in tears and prayers, have lamented over these evils that are now pervading the religious world. In our private conversations we have most solemnly deplored the divided condition of those who are endeavoring to serve Jesus.

The apostle Paul, when writing to the church at Corinth, says: "I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it." Now, what do you suppose old brother Paul would say if he were here? He would certainly tell us that there are divisions among us; and surely he would tell the truth. But another thought in this connection: How would we feel about our divided state were Paul to come to this place?

Paul said to the Corinthians, when he learned of their divided state: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Brethren, we do not heed this admonition, for one says, "Lo! here is Christ and *we* are right;" another has it, "Lo! here is Christ and *we* are right." One is arrayed against the other, and this difficulty has found its way even into the family circle. Our town is in a complete uproar, no one can be baptized without setting the whole community of tongues on fire. We are divided against ourselves, and the good book tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand. So it is with us: we must soon agree and come to some kind of an understanding regarding the action in Christian baptism, or else infidelity will take the place. For this purpose we have convened, and I trust that all present will be free to speak, as we desire to hear from you all.

BAPTIST.*—Brethren, I am in full sympathy with Bro. C's remarks which he has just presented regarding the re-

* Hereafter we designate the speakers by the name of the church to which they belong.

ligious condition of our town. I have lived here over five years, and saw this evil rocked in the cradle of religion, dandled upon the knee of sectarianism, but now it is full grown, and behold the discord that it has thrown broadcast over our land. Nor have these serious difficulties been confined to the town only; they have found their way to the country, and are being discussed in every farmhouse in the community. And let me tell you if there is not a successful effort made to bring about a union between contending parties, difficulties far more startling than any we have yet seen will soon be staring us boldly in the face.

Families have been divided among themselves, some believing in one mode and some in another. This has even found its way into my once happy family. My faithful wife, like an angel, has stood by my side in sickness as well as in health, in misfortune as well as success; has shared my sorrows, and cheerfully borne a part of my burden,—all this without a murmur. The first years of our married life were those of a happy period; no sorrow crossed our peaceful path, but an unbroken stream of pleasure flowed from heart to heart, till our first-born was nearly two years old. The little one was the golden link that bound our hearts in one.

Though my wife was brought up in the Methodist faith, and always remained firm to that belief, still this caused no ill feeling between us, till one of her ministers called upon her and urged, during the conversation, the necessity of having our little boy sprinkled. This I firmly opposed, and was on the other hand strongly confronted by my wife and her friends. Being brought up in the Baptist faith I never could consent to having one of my children sprinkled, believing infant sprinkling to be a human invention. My wife plead, but I resisted, until finally our little one was taken sick and died; the good Lord took him from us. It was with much sorrow that we gave him up. But the greater trouble was yet to come. My wife has since been told that

we did wrong in not having our little boy baptized before his death. Though she murmurs not, she has never seen a happy day since that time. And why all of this? Simply because we cannot agree in baptism. We must do something; though it may not affect our domestic enjoyment, yet we will be able to benefit the rising generation.

METHODIST.—Few brethren have lamented more over these serious difficulties than myself. My wife was a member of the Disciple church when I married her, but I thought that our religious differences, like all others, would soon vanish. One and twenty years have passed and she is still of the same faith, and when I tell her about my getting religion, she asks me for *a thus saith the Lord*, just as though I could prove everything by the Bible. Only four weeks ago our daughter was converted at our protracted meeting. Through the arguments of her mother she was prevailed upon to be immersed, was unwilling to stand on trial six months, and as our minister was too delicate to go into the cold water in the dead of winter, she went to the Disciples and was immersed when it was so cold that they had to cut the ice. My wife rejoiced at the young girl's courage, as she calls it, while I was much grieved. I am decidedly in favor of doing something, providing it is for the better.

BRETHREN.—Respected friends, the evil of which we have been speaking has filled our entire nation with discord and practices that are unauthorized by the Word of the Lord, and all this simply because we have failed to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto us. The difficulties are now among us, they have long been in existence and should have, ere this, been nipped in the bud. We must do something to effect a sameness of practice if we would prosper as we should. There is no way left but to go back to the apostolic age, find the ancient method and adopt it as our regular practice.

CHRISTIAN.—I fully agree with you all that we are placed in a deplorable condition from baptism being practiced in so many different ways. Our children as well as our neighbors know not what to do when they see these conflicting methods among us. One of my sons has joined the Brethren and was dipped three times, another has joined the Baptists and was baptized by single immersion, the third joined the Methodists and was sprinkled; and the fourth declares that he will neither read nor have anything to do with a Bible that teaches such conflicting methods, and my son is on the brink of infidelity, and I fear that he will yet bring the gray hairs of his aged father in sorrow to the grave. Paul teaches us that there should be no divisions among us; and in that memorable prayer that he uttered just before his death, our Savior prayed that we might be *one* as he and his Father are one. Oh! brethren, let us be one both in faith and practice that the world may believe that Christ is with us.

DISCIPLE.—No one more fervently desires the removal of these difficulties than myself, no one believes more firmly than I that there should be but one baptism among us. We have but one Lord, one faith, and I therefore maintain that we should have but one baptism, and let that be the Bible method,—a method on which we can all unite. We want the common ground in baptism as the only basis of our union in practice, and when we come to this then we can all be perfectly joined together in the same mind, judgment and practice.

EPISCOPALIAN.—The subject of a union in our practice has not yet received very much of my attention, nor have I thought of the matter very seriously till this evening. I am made very sensible of the serious difficulties arising from our conflicting methods of baptizing. The large body of Christians which I represent, extends back some considerable distance into the period of this religious controversy.

It has given us some perplexities in an ecclesiastical point of view, not so seriously, however, as is now pervading this town, but by wise and judicious legislation we have generally been able to give very good satisfaction. Though I do not apprehend the dangers growing out of our differences to such an extent as most of you, yet I am willing to render what assistance I can to aid you in effecting this union in faith and practice.

LUTHERAN.—Gentlemen, by permission of our chairman I remark that if we are desirous of becoming a unit in our method of baptizing, I am thinking we will meet with difficulties more serious than we are prepared for. Before this union can be effected some of us must give up our practice, and who will it be? I am, however, very desirous of a union in practice. Though I have my doubts about it being effected, yet I am willing to assist you all I can, though I do not want to get into the matter so deep but that I will be able to get out again if I see unsurmountable difficulties ahead.

BAPTIST.—It is not so important now to know who will give up his practice, but more properly, What must be done?

CHRISTIAN.—Brethren, we see the evil resulting from the conflicting practices among us, and we all agree that something must be done, and now, What must be done? is the great question that should concern each one of us.

DISCIPLE.—I move that we adjourn till this night one week, and then, when we come together, we will see if we cannot agree to have one Lord, one faith and *one baptism.* (Adjourned.)

CHAPTER II.

The Second Meeting, and the Proceedings.

CHRISTIAN.—Brethren, this night one week ago, we met at this place and lamented over our conflicting theories, or rather practices, and we seemed to be pretty generally impressed with the necessity of doing something to relieve us of this discord and confusion. To-night we have met to conclude what would best be done, and I trust we have come together in the spirit of true Christian union, and will therefore do all in our power to accomplish the desired work. I earnestly desire that we all labor to this end that we be enabled to come to some definite understanding, respecting the duties now devolving upon us.

BAPTIST.—I propose that we adopt but one mode of baptizing, and let that be something upon which we can all agree. We can never prosper in this divided condition, but only help the infidels to unanswerable arguments.

LUTHERAN.—We should not fail to keep this important consideration before our minds. We are laboring to come to some agreement respecting our method of baptizing. It seems there is a desire for but one mode, and if we go so far as to adopt but one, then, from the various ones now in use, we should select one fully adapted to *all reasonable circumstances and cases.*

DISCIPLE.—The first thing in hand to-night, seems to me is: Are we willing to make an effort to unite on one method?—and if we are, then it will be proper to discuss what method that shall be.

METHODIST.—I am willing on condition it does not conflict with the discipline of our church.

BRETHREN.—I have no sympathies with anybody's discipline. We want but one method of baptizing, and I don't care what it conflicts with, just so it is according to the Gospel. We want nothing but evangelical baptism.

DISCIPLE.—Amen to that; we want to throw away all our pre-conceived notions about baptism and come direct to the Bible. If we all agree to adopt but one mode, and one only, I am pretty certain that that will be the Gospel mode.

LUTHERAN.—Brethren, we want to be very careful what mode we adopt. We may sanction that which is not adapted to all circumstances and conditions of life. I am willing to adopt one mode, and as I practice three, I will give up two of them, and if the rest of you will be that liberal we will not be long about agreeing.

METHODIST.—I will do the same if proper discretion is used.

EPISCOPALIAN.—It certainly would be wisdom in us to agree to one method if all parties can be satisfied.

CHRISTIAN.—We are then agreed. The next question then is, What mode will we adopt?

DISCIPLE.—I propose we adopt the Gospel mode, and then we will be sure we are right.

BRETHREN.—I am agreed to that.

BAPTIST.—So am I. We want nothing but the Gospel practice.

LUTHERAN.—Gentlemen, I have offered you a fair proposition, and aim to stick to it. I am willing to give up two of my modes and retain one only. I will give up immersion and pouring, but retain sprinkling, a method that is wisely adapted to all circumstances and conditions of life.

METHODIST.—I am agreed to that. In the winter it is often too cold to immerse, and during the summer season water is sometimes too scarce to immerse, but sprinkling can be used at any time.

DISCIPLE.—I will agree to give up immersion if you will prove sprinkling to be of divine authority. If you will show me one instance where the apostles ever sprinkled any person, I am agreed.

BAPTIST.—I can show plenty of instances where persons were baptized in the apostolic times, but no one can show that they ever sprinkled with water then. I am not ready to give up immersion.

LUTHERAN.—I don't think you ought to be too hard on us, as we have agreed to give up two of our modes, and you certainly ought to be willing to give up one.

CHRISTIAN.—We will give up one mode if you will prove that sprinkling is the only method of baptizing taught in the New Testament.

METHODIST.—I am not willing to give up my entire religion, I will give up two of my modes of baptizing, and if you will give up one, then we are agreed.

DISCIPLE.—We don't ask you to give up your whole religion, but we desire you to abandon that which is not evangelical. You give up two of your modes, that is, sprinkling and pouring, and then we will be agreed.

METHODIST.—Gentlemen, if this is the case then there is no use talking; we cannot agree. I never caused this trouble; it was not brought about by our members. The Methodist church at this place was organized more than twenty-five years ago. We had no difficulty about baptizing then. When a person wanted to be immersed our preacher immersed him and that settled the matter. If any wanted to be baptized otherwise it was done, and nobody thought of making a fuss about it; but when the Baptists and Disciples came in here and commenced preaching up immersion and down sprinkling and pouring, then the difficulty commenced. Had they preached the Gospel and let sprinkling and pouring alone, there would have been no occasion for this trouble.

DISCIPLE.—You say had we preached the Gospel and let sprinkling and pouring alone this trouble would not have happened. Well now, sir, if a man can preach the Gospel and say nothing about sprinkling and pouring, it follows that sprinkling and pouring are not in the Gospel. No man

can preach the Gospel without preaching baptism, but he can preach the Gospel without preaching sprinkling and pouring; therefore sprinkling and pouring are not baptism.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Suppose you do adopt immersion as your only method, here are a large number of Brethren in and around town, and they practice trine immersion. How are you going to meet this difficulty? They will not practice single immersion. Are you prepared to accept of their threefold immersion?

LUTHERAN.—Yes, and there are a hundred other difficulties in the way. There are infant baptism, backward and forward baptism, and then there is baptism for the remission of sins. How are we going to agree on all of these?

DISCIPLE.—Paul settles the question of trine immersion when he says *one* baptism. So we don't want three.

BAPTIST.—Trine immersion is too much in the minority to be particularly in the way of a union on this question.

METHODIST.—I don't think that our Disciple brother has much right to say anything against trine immersion, as he takes into his church all those who have been dipped three times that he can get, and that, too, without re-baptizing them. He must certainly consider it a good baptism, as he takes it without any discount.

BRETHREN.—I am of the impression that when you come to closely examine the subject, you will learn that trine immersion is the only common ground of union to be found in baptism.

CHRISTIAN.—Just as long as we continue to throw out insinuations against each other's practice, like we have been doing to-night, we can never come to an agreement. We have now spent two evenings together and we are no nearer united than when we commenced. We want a uniformity in practice, and so long as we continue to defend our own views and oppose others, nothing can be accomplished. It is now nearly time to adjourn.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I move that we adjourn till this night two weeks.

METHODIST.—Before we are dismissed, I want to say that I expect to come to our next meeting prepared to prove that sprinkling is the only method that we can successfully adopt and use.

CHAPTER III.

Third Meeting.

METHODIST.—I promised two weeks ago to give you my reasons why I think sprinkling is the mode we should adopt. It has been used by many of the best and most learned men of modern times,—such as Calvin, Luther and Wesley. And besides this, it is adapted to all circumstances and can be used where there is not much water. It is particularly adapted to the wants of those who are sick. You all know that Palestine, where Christ and the apostles preached, was a very dry country.

DISCIPLE.—My Bible in Deut. 8: 7 says it is “a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of the valleys and hills.”

METHODIST.—I am not through with my speech yet: you should wait till I sit down. Then I don’t think there was water enough in Jerusalem to immerse so many as were baptized there. They evidently must have received baptism by sprinkling. If we adopt any mode I would be in favor of using sprinkling only. But it seems to me that it would be much better if we would let each one have his own choice and say nothing more about it.

BRETHREN.—You are, then, in favor of giving each one his own choice about baptism?

METHODIST.—Certainly I am. That would be right.

BRETHREN.—Do you think the apostles gave each one on the Day of Pentecost his choice about how to be baptized?

METHODIST.—Certainly I do. That would be fair.

BRETHREN.—Well, about how many do you think were sprinkled? how many received pouring? and how many were immersed?

METHODIST.—Well, it's a little hard to tell; but the way matters of the kind generally run now, I would suppose about one thousand to each mode.

BRETHREN.—That would then leave one thousand to be immersed.

METHODIST.—Yes, and the other two thousand to be sprinkled and receive pouring.

BRETHREN.—Where do you suppose they could find enough water in Jerusalem, if it were such a dry place, as you say, to immerse that one thousand?

BAPTIST.—There, you must give it up. You have found plenty of water in Jerusalem at last.

LUTHERAN.—I am not yet convinced that sprinkling and pouring are not right.

CHRISTIAN.—We need not bother our brains so much about sprinkling and pouring being right, but let us try to find common ground which we all can unite upon.

DISCIPLE.—It seems to me that we are now coming to a point where we can accomplish something; I will therefore proceed to state some facts that we will do well to constantly bear in mind. When Christ was baptized he was baptized in one way only, and those who use three modes must admit that two of them, at least, are different from the mode to which our Savior submitted, and he has, therefore, set but one example, while the other two were set by somebody else. He commanded the apostles to baptize all nations, and in using the word "baptize" he had but one method in view. Those who use three have at least two that the Savior did not command. When the apostles baptized they

used but one method. Those who use three must admit that two of them are unauthorized by the practice of the apostles. If we conclude to endorse by our practice three modes, then turn the thing which way you please, you have two modes that Christ did not command,—we have two modes for which we have no divine precedent. I am of the impression that there is common ground, for which we have divine precedent, on which we can all unite.

BAPTIST.—It seems to me that there is one way of viewing this subject that will enable us to form a pretty accurate idea as to what the ancient method was. If sprinkling was the apostolic practice for baptism, then pouring would never have been introduced, and if pouring had been the primitive method, then immersion would never have been dreamed of. As man is inclined to substitute the more easy for that which is not so convenient, it is not reasonable to suppose that any one would have substituted immersion for either sprinkling or pouring.

DISCIPLE.—Furthermore, if we are permitted to use reliable history, we are able to trace immersion from the present time back to a period so early that it is safe to conclude it to have been the apostolic method. In short, immersion can be successfully traced beyond the rise of the practice of either sprinkling or pouring. It is also a common practice among all the leading denominations at the present time.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I was of the impression that our object was to unite upon some ground in baptism, and not enter into a regular discussion of the action of baptism.

LUTHERAN.—Brethren, we want to be careful what we do, we may yet be caught in the old trap of immersion.

METHODIST.—If we adopt any method I propose we adopt sprinkling.

EPISCOPALIAN AND LUTHERAN.—We agree to that; it is adapted to all circumstances.

DISCIPLE.—I object to sprinkling on the ground that it is not common ground in baptism among us. We must resort to something in which we all can agree. Immersion is common ground. Brethren, Methodist, Lutheran and Episcopalian, do you not all believe that immersion is valid?

METHODIST, LUTHERAN AND EPISCOPALIAN.—Certainly we believe immersion to be valid, and we frequently practice it when called on to do so.

DISCIPLE.—Here, then, is common ground. We all believe in immersion, though there are four of us who do not believe in either sprinkling or pouring. To adopt sprinkling would be to endorse that in which but three of us believe, and if immersion is adopted then we have something that we all can sanction, and I do not think that we all would be willing to sanction that for which we have no divine precedent.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I see more clearly than ever, amid all our conflicting theories and discords, the common ground on which we can all unite. I certainly must give this matter some thought till our next meeting.

LUTHERAN.—Just as I thought, we are running headlong right into immersion. If we decide that sprinkling is not baptism, then we unchristianize thousands of good old fathers and mothers who have long since gone to their rest. We must keep our eyes open.

BRETHREN.—It is not our purpose to unchristianize any one, our object is to find the common ground of union in baptism and then unite upon it.

LUTHERAN.—Well, but what about my father and mother who were sprinkled? I know and must believe that they have gone to heaven.

CHRISTIAN.—We are not here to determine the destiny of our parents. Our destiny in the Christian life does not depend upon what they have done. We can believe what we think is proper about their destiny. We cannot expect

to come to a union respecting the things of which the Bible does not treat. It is a union of practice in baptism that we are working for, and I am of the impression that we have found it, and it is now ready for us to unite upon.

METHODIST.—My mind is much clearer on this subject than when we first commenced our deliberations. I now see clearly that there is common ground in baptism on which we can all unite. Though it will prove me an unbaptized man, as I was sprinkled when young, yet I am willing to do anything I see to be right. I have no desire to be wrong.

LUTHERAN.—Yes, and it will unbaptize nearly the whole Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and the Lord only knows how many other churches. It will unbaptize millions who have long since gone to rest.

DISCIPLE.—It will not unbaptize one single human being. If they *have been* baptized, then they cannot be unbaptized by any power in the land. If they are not baptized, then our actions cannot alter their case. It is for the living and not for the dead that we are working. We are not attempting to unite the dead in baptism, but we believe that the living can be brought to an agreement and union in the action of baptism.

LUTHERAN.—I am astonished at the way things are going. I am not yet ready to be dipped in some frog-pond just for the sake of an outward union. I think we can get along very well the way we have been doing. But as I told you before, there are a hundred other difficulties yet to be encountered, and you will see them before this meeting is over.

BRETHREN.—Friend Lutheran, did you ever immerse any one?

LUTHERAN.—Certainly I have; we do so when called upon by those who wish to be immersed.

BRETHREN.—Well, did you ever immerse in a *frog-pond*?

LUTHERAN.—Well, no, I never did, but perhaps I ought not to have said *frog-pond*. I will take that back. But then I am not ready to be immersed.

METHODIST.—I move that we adjourn till to-night two weeks, and during that time we will have an opportunity of thinking over what has passed, and I hope when we meet again there will be nothing in the way of union.

CHAPTER IV.

The Fourth Meeting of the Leading Members of the Various Religious Bodies in Uniontown.

METHODIST.—Brethren, I have given the action of baptism much thought since our last meeting at this place. I am convinced that immersion is the only ground of union in baptism on which we can all unite. I cannot consistently ask you to accept sprinkling, as you do not all believe in it, but you can consistently ask me to accept immersion as I believe in and practice it.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I am led to the same conclusions after mature deliberation. I am acquainted with the arguments *pro* and *con*, regarding the action of Christian baptism, but have never before been made so sensible of the fact that immersion is the common ground on which we can all unite. The thought strikes me very forcibly that this must be the one baptism mentioned by Paul. It does not seem likely that the only ground of union in baptism should be the wrong method.

LUTHERAN.—I feel the force of the arguments and conclusions that have been offered here. I have done little during the last two weeks save reading on the subject, though I am not yet ready to adopt immersion as our ground of union. There is a difficulty in the way of our union that I think ought to be removed before we go further;

and that is the design of baptism; there are those here who claim that it is one of the conditions of pardon.

BAPTIST.—I object to that question, as it does not properly belong to the action of Christian baptism. Our object is to unite on the method of administering baptism.

DISCIPLE.—Though the question may not be just in order, yet at the same time I believe that I can throw some light on the subject, and then dismiss it. I do not believe baptism to be any more essential to salvation than faith and repentance, nor do I regard it as being of any value without faith and repentance. We first ask, Is baptism a command? All say it is. Is it right for us to obey this command? Here all must say it is. We next ask, Is obedience essential to salvation? You all will admit that it is. Is it wrong not to obey God's commands? You admit that it is. Then is it wrong to refuse to be baptized? Here we must have the same answer. Can a man be saved who does wrong? You say not. You then make out baptism just as essential as other commands. It will then be safe for us to teach all who believe to repent and be baptized. But as this does not properly belong to the matter in hand, we close these few remarks and drop it.

METHODIST.—I would like to know whether this meeting considers baptism one of the conditions of pardon.

BRETHREN—As we are working for safe ground in all matters pertaining to religion, the safest way that we can do is to teach and obey the command respecting baptism as we would any other command. Teach and obey it as laid down in the Bible; then we know we are right.

LUTHERAN.—It seems we are now pretty well agreed on immersion as being the only common ground of union in baptism, on which we can all unite. Now there is another matter in the way, and if it can be settled then I am with you. That is trine immersion. What are we going to do about that?

DISCIPLE.—Paul says there is *one baptism*, not three. I think the Bible will settle this question.

CHRISTIAN.—It seems to me that single immersion should be the grand center around which we should all meet. Our Methodist, Lutheran and Episcopalian brethren have given up sprinkling and pouring, and are willing to unite with us on immersion as the only common ground of union; now, then, let our trine immersionist brother lay aside his threefold immersion and we are all agreed.

BRETHREN.—When you ask me to accept single immersion you are urging something on me which I do not believe. Our Methodist, Lutheran and Episcopalian friends believed in immersion before you asked them to accept it. They accepted something in which they had previously believed. I do not believe in nor practice single immersion, and must therefore have my faith changed before I can accept it.

BAPTIST.—It does not seem right that all of us should yield to the wishes of one man. We are agreed with the exception of one.

LUTHERAN.—Just as I thought when I told you that there were greater difficulties ahead. Here is one that I do not think we will be able to remove.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I have been looking forward to this trine immersion question with much anxiety, knowing that there is more in it, as a basis of union, than most of us are aware of. It is an ancient practice that extends far back into antiquity, and constitutes the great royal highway over which modern writers trace the practice of immersion.

METHODIST.—I have myself been looking forward to the investigation of this subject. I have read much during the last five weeks, and have found much matter, far more than I anticipated, on trine immersion. To my astonishment I discovered that Wesley himself frequently practiced it. It was also sanctioned by both Luther and Calvin.

LUTHERAN.—What! you say *Luther* sanctioned trine immersion?

METHODIST.—Yes, I have the proof in black and white.

LUTHERAN.—Well, I must see the book that contains that. Don't fail to bring it to our next meeting.

METHODIST.—You shall see the book. But there is another feature in this matter to which I have not yet referred. Those who practice single immersion acknowledge trine immersion to be valid baptism, while those who practice the trine will not admit the single to be valid.

BAPTIST.—Trine immersion is of Catholic origin and cannot be accepted as the common ground of union in our practice.

DISCIPLE.—Trine immersion originated about the beginning of the third century and is too young for us to accept as apostolical.

BRETHREN.—Trine immersion did not originate in the third century; as Clement of Alexandria, who lived and wrote in the *second* century, speaks of it as the practice in his day. More than this, Campbell, in his writings, when endeavoring to trace immersion to the days of the apostles, does so by calling forward ancient witnesses who state that the primitive method was trine immersion.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Campbell says that the Greek church has never given up the primitive practice. Now we all know that this large body of professing Christians does to this day practice trine immersion. This certainly is a strong argument in favor of the threefold immersion, coming from the practice of men who could read the Greek New Testament as their own mother tongue.

BRETHREN.—Single immersion is a human invention, was invented by Eunomius near the middle of the fourth century; so says Theodoret, Sozomen, Bingham and Dr. Wall. As for backward immersion it is not yet four hundred years old.

DISCIPLE.—I understand baptism to be a burial, and we don't bury people on their faces.

BRETHREN.—True, baptism is a burial, but Paul in his letter to the Romans, tells us that in this burial we are planted together in the likeness of Christ's death. Now the Savior's death took place on the cross, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. In the likeness of this death we bow *forward* in baptism.

DISCIPLE.—But the church is above the water. We lay persons backward into the water that we may raise them up out of the water forward into the church. Bear in mind that the church is above and not under the water, and we must come up into it forward.

BRETHREN.—You say that the church is always above the water. Well, I suppose if you were crossing the Mississippi River in a boat, and would fall overboard, go to the bottom and there drown before you could be got out, you would die out of the church, would you?

EPISCOPALIAN.—It seems to me that I see another clear point in this part of the controversy. According to the immersionist's way of translating the New Testament they make Paul say that "so many of us as have been *immersed* into Christ have put on Christ." Now it would seem according to this they would get into Christ by *immersion*. Immere means to put the candidate into, or under the water, while *emersion* means to take or raise out of the water. According to Bro. Disciple's argument about raising a person up out of the water into the church, it would seem that he is of the impression that they get into the church by *emersion*, which means to take out, and not as Paul says by *immersion*, which means to *put into*. You see he and Paul don't agree. Paul says we get into the church by *immersion*, while Bro. Disciple says we get into her by *emersion*.

METHODIST.—Our Baptist brother, the other night, said it would not be likely that the ancient church would ex-

change sprinkling for immersion if the former had been the first practice. Now it strikes me that if single immersion had been the ancient method they never would have changed it for trine immersion, especially when the former is much more convenient than the latter. This would appear unreasonable. The most plausible theory that I can think of at present is the following: Trine immersion was the first method, and finally *two* of the actions were omitted, leaving but one. In the course of time this was exchanged for pouring, the latter being more convenient than immersion; but the last step in the descent was to introduce sprinkling in the place of pouring.

BAPTIST.—I am astonished that our Methodist brother should turn trine immersionist. It seems since he has commenced turning he just keeps at it.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I do not think that our Baptist brother has much room for talking about turning. If his own church historians are to be relied upon, the whole Baptist church has changed in their method of baptizing. You are aware that they claim that the true church consists in organic connection, and they also aim to trace the Baptist church from the present time to the apostles, but, in endeavoring to accomplish this, they always run their historical claims through the trine immersionist churches. This is their invariable practice. Now, if their own writers tell the truth, then they have changed from trine to single immersion. If they do not write the truth then their theory of organic succession is false.

METHODIST.—You see I am determined, since I have commenced changing, to keep on till I am right. You know I have been wrong in my practice and now I want to be sure I am right. I was urged to adopt immersion, as it is common ground in baptism, being a practice that we all sanction and believe to be valid. But it seems to me I see another point ahead and am getting ready for it. We all admit trine

immersion to be valid, and if both be true we have two common grounds. We must either accept them both or get one of them out of the way.

LUTHERAN.—Well, I have not exactly done any turning yet, and I don't intend to till this difficulty is removed. You see Bro. Disciple believes in trine immersion, for one of the Brethren sisters got a little too proud to be satisfied among such people, and last Sunday she made application for membership in the Disciple church and was received without re-baptizing. You see he must believe in trine immersion or else he would not accept it.

DISCIPLE.—I think by our next meeting I will be able to clear up the difficulty about us acknowledging trine immersion to be valid baptism.

CHRISTIAN.—I move that we adjourn till this night two weeks.

BAPTIST.—I prefer that we adjourn till *four* weeks. I have my reasons for so long a time. Here at this meeting our Bro. Episcopalian remarked that it is an invariable rule,—in tracing the organic connection of the Baptist church to the apostolic age, to always run the historical chain through churches whose practice was trine immersion. I have never given this part of the subject much attention. As our brother is a man of much reading, I will not now question his statement, I am afraid it is too true; I want time to give the subject a thorough examination before our next meeting.

CHAPTER V.

Proceedings of the Next Meeting.

LUTHERAN.—I come before you to express my astonishment at the result of my investigation. I could not wait till this meeting to learn what Luther says about trine immersion. I visited Bro. Methodist, and, to my astonishment, saw

that Luther in his works, as translated by C. L. Loos, does sanction the threefold immersion. During my investigation I discovered that the Episcopal church, in its early day, had trine immersion as its general practice. I also learned that the whole Roman Catholic church did at one time use the same method; and Hinton, a learned Baptist writer, in his work on baptism, says that trine immersion prevailed in the West as well as in the East till the year A. D. 633, but after this time it gradually gave way to single immersion in the West.

METHODIST.—I would like to hear Bro. Disciple clear up his reason for regarding trine immersion valid baptism.

DISCIPLE.—It is true when persons, who have been dipped three times, desire to unite with us, we usually receive them on their baptism. When receiving them with their baptism, it is our rule to receive but one of the three actions, and in that way we sanction but one baptism.

BRETHREN.—Which of the three actions do you receive?

LUTHERAN.—Yes, and what do you do with the other two?

METHODIST.—There is another matter for Bro. Disciple to settle; he said a person must be laid *backward* in the water that he might be raised up *forward into* the church. But those who have been dipped three times were placed *forward* into the water, and when he receives one of these forward actions; how does he harmonize it with his theory of coming up *face forward* out of the water into the church?

LUTHERAN.—I suppose that by this time he concludes that the church is a little like the land of Canaan, we must go *through* the water to get to it. I want to hear him state which one of the three actions he receives.

DISCIPLE.—Well, who says our church acknowledges trine immersion to be valid?

METHODIST.—Don't you receive persons into your church who have been baptized by trine immersion? You

certainly would not be willing to receive a baptism that you think is not valid.

DISCIPLE.—Well, but I am not the whole church. Did you ever hear of any of our leading men saying it is valid baptism?

BRETHREN.—Yes, Isaac Errett, in the *Christian Standard* says it ought to be recognized as valid baptism.

METHODIST.—I would like to know if a baptism can be valid without being Scriptural?

DISCIPLE.—Certainly not, any baptism must be Scriptural in order to be valid.

BRETHREN.—Well, Isaac Errett says trine immersion is valid, it therefore must be Scriptural, as no baptism can be valid without being Scriptural. Is trine immersion in your estimation Scriptural?

DISCIPLE.—No, sir, I don't believe it to be taught in the Bible.

METHODIST.—If it is not taught in the Bible, where do you get your authority for acknowledging a thing valid, not in the Bible.

DISCIPLE.—Well, how about Paul's one baptism? There are not three there.

BRETHREN.—This is quite easy to harmonize.—Paul is speaking of the ordinance itself, and not the number of actions required to constitute it. The number of actions in baptism must be learned from the commission. Matthew has it, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The three names here, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, demand each an action, and such is the grammatical meaning of the language, and is so admitted by all ancient Greek scholars who have written on the subject. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in reality three persons, though they are also one. Just so with Christian baptism, it is one baptism, but composed of three actions.

BAPTIST.—There is no use arguing about us acknowledging trine immersion to be valid baptism; we all sanction it by our practice. There is no getting around this point. To me it is a puzzling matter.

DISCIPLE.—What, are you going to turn that way too? How would this appear to the world? We must stand up for the one baptism, and not for three.

LUTHERAN.—You have *two* baptisms in your church, one single immersion and the other trine immersion. How does that look by the side of Paul's one baptism?

EPISCOPALIAN.—This is truly a grave subject; one, in order to settle, would carry us far back into antiquity. The origin of the threefold immersion is hid in the remote depths of Christian antiquity. There is no church of any note in existence, that holds any just claim to age, whose history, if followed up, will not finally lead us into trine immersion. These are facts, however much they may be against our taste.

DISCIPLE.—I am not in favor of settling this matter by history, because that is a portion of literature that cannot be depended upon.

EPISCOPALIAN.—It is true that this union cannot be brought about by historical testimony only, nevertheless, history has an important bearing on the subject. Regarding the ancient practice in baptism, all reliable history is of one voice; and if we confine ourselves to the first five centuries of the Christian era, there is not one dissenting voice in the vast multitude of witnesses. Certainly such a harmonious sentiment from such a cloud of witnesses,—yea, Christian writers, should not be set aside without giving something more than ordinary reasons.

DISCIPLE.—Were there not many errors in the church during the second and third centuries that crept in after the apostles died? And if so, may not trine immersion have been one of these errors?

EPISCOPALIAN.—Whatever errors may have been introduced, whatever changes may have been made, or whatever may have been the differences existing between contending parties, it is a stubborn fact that they all practiced trine immersion. Regarding this one particular point, all ancient history is one voice; such another peculiarity on any other point of Christian doctrine is hardly to be found in the annals of history. To suppose trine immersion to have been one of the errors that found its way into the church during the second century, would be to *first* suppose that the *whole church*, from east to west, from north to south, changed her practice without one known dissenting voice, as not one word has come down to us relating to any controversy on the subject; one of the most unreasonable suppositions that is possible for a well-read man to conceive.

LUTHERAN.—If history has no bearing on the action in baptism, why is it that Campbell quoted it so much in his debate with N. L. Rice? Why does he quote it so much in his writings? And why does Bro. Disciple use it when he gets into a debate with one of our preachers, and, to cap the climax, why did he use it in the early part of our meetings in order to prove that *immersion* was the ancient practice?

BAPTIST.—This is a serious matter that we have on our hands; I had no idea that there would be so much controversy over it. Respecting backward immersion, my mind is firmly settled; both Judson and Robinson state it to have been a human invention, while the primitive mode was to dip forward. During the last few weeks I have done an immense amount of reading, and have been equally as much astonished. I am not ready yet to turn trine immersionist, but there are some facts that I must relate. We, as a people, have been proud of our organic connection with the primitive Christians, and have written much on the subject. But when I came to look up our chain of history, I discovered that all our connections were with ancient churches

that practiced trine immersion, nor was I able to trace single immersion any farther back than near the close of the fourth century, where it is said to have been invented by Eunomius. Those old churches, such as the Waldenses, Donatists, and many others, with whom we claimed connection, all practiced trine immersion, thus forever cutting off our organic connection through single immersion. And as Campbell received his baptism from our church, our Bro. Disciple must stand or fall, in this particular, as fate affects the Baptist church.

DISCIPLE.—It does seem to me that you are running headlong into trine immersion, and if matters continue at this rate we will all be turn-coats yet. I have been reading my Bible the last twenty years, and I find no threefold immersion there.

METHODIST.—Perhaps you have been reading with your single immersion spectacles on. This sometimes has much to do with how we see things. I once thought I could see sprinkling and pouring all through the New Testament; but since I took off my spectacles, and look at the good book with a mind clear of prejudice, I see nothing of the kind any more.

CHRISTIAN.—I have said nothing for some time, as I was deeply engaged in thought regarding the proper course to pursue. I am not so much of a believer in the great virtue of baptism as many of you, yet I know it is God's command, and it is for us to obey, and whatever is worth doing at all is certainly worth doing right. It seems to me that we have been picking too much at each other's practices, and have not sufficiently discussed the great point of union in the action of baptism. We certainly ought to labor for this object.

DISCIPLE.—I favor union in baptism, and think that single immersion should be the ground for this union. The number who practice trine immersion are too small to claim

their practice as such a basis for such a vast multitude of professing Christians.

LUTHERAN.—It is my impression that Campbell speaks of *seventy-five or a hundred million* of Greeks who testify in favor of the ancient practice. Now all those Greeks practiced trine immersion. How does this look for small numbers?

EPISCOPALIAN.—Trine immersion was the prevailing practice of all leading bodies of professing Christians prior to the Reformation, while single immersion was used only to a limited extent. When it comes to numbers, trine immersion has the field beyond question, probably five to one.

CHRISTIAN.—Is there not common ground here, even amid all our disputing and contending, on which we can unite? God's law is perfect, and it does seem to me that there is ground of union here if we will only turn our attention to looking it up.

METHODIST.—As I before said, we cannot ask our trine immersionist brother to accept single immersion, as it is a practice in which he does not believe, and never practices. It is, therefore, not common ground.

DISCIPLE.—Well, must we all go over to trine immersion? This certainly would be asking too much.

EPISCOPALIAN.—We can never unite on anything but *common* ground; it must be a practice in which we *all* believe,—one that all of us can sanction.

METHODIST.—It seems to me that we are now coming to the very vital point. I want to be right. Just as soon as I saw clearly that immersion was common ground on which we could all meet, and sprinkling and pouring were not, I was ready to adopt it, and unite upon it. I was compelled to make one turn, and I am going to keep on until I am certain of being right. I never want to change again after I find the right way.

BRETHREN.—I cannot sanction the single immersion, as I believe it to come short of God's Word, and, therefore, not valid. Not so with you, however, about trine immersion; you all sanction it, and believe it to be valid baptism.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Here is common ground on which we can all meet in regard to faith and practice. Bro. Disciple don't you believe trine immersion is valid?

DISCIPLE.—We receive persons into our church who have been baptized in that way, and we are compelled to admit it to be valid.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Bro. Baptist, do you not believe trine immersion is valid baptism?

BAPTIST.—I must confess it is, as all ancient churches, whom we call Baptists, practice trine immersion in their method of baptizing.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Bro. Christian, you believe that trine immersion is valid, do you not?

CHRISTIAN.—Our church does, as we receive those who have been thus baptized into fellowship in our church.

EPISCOPALIAN.—I am satisfied that both brethren, Methodist and Lutheran, believe the same; and you know that our friend of the Brethren church does, and now, then, right here we have common ground on which we can all unite, which is the only common ground in baptism that I can see.

METHODIST.—When at a former meeting I proposed sprinkling as our ground of union, it was quickly shown that it was not common ground, as only a part of us believed in it. Just so with trine and single immersion; the latter is not common ground,—all of us do not believe in it.

DISCIPLE.—We all believe in single immersion, except our trine immersionist brother. He is the only one who believes differently.

METHODIST.—There is this difference; he believes in trine immersion, and so do we. In this one particular our faith is one. But, on the other hand, *we* sanction single im-

mersion while he does not. We agree with him but he cannot agree with us.

BRETHREN.—Amid all our conflicting theories we have common ground where we all can unite. For instance, the various denominations have and use their different disciplines, which make a marked difference in their practice. Now, you may select any one of these disciplines, and these different denominations can never unite upon one, because they do not all believe it. But just hold up the Bible as the only ground of union and they can all agree to that; and why? Simply because it is from the Lord, and they all believe it. Just so with trine and single immersion; we can not unite upon the latter, because it is not common ground. We do not all believe in it. But just hold up trine immersion and you have something that we all believe to be valid, and it is the only method in which we all believe alike. Does it seem reasonable that the very method that we all believe to be valid should be the wrong one? Is it possible that when we come to *truth* we *disagree*; and when it comes to *error* we *agree*?

EPISCOPALIAN.—There is a point right here that strikes my mind very forcibly. We have long been disputing about our disciplines and confession of faith, and never could agree upon any one of them. But amid all of this we have the Bible, a book that we all believe; and it so happens that the very book that we all believe in is the very one that is from the Lord himself. Now, then, is it not so with our methods of baptizing? We have been disputing about the validity of sprinkling, pouring and single immersion, but amid all of this we admit trine immersion to be valid. And if it is not the Bible method, it seems strange that it is the only method that we all can agree upon as being valid baptism.

LUTHERAN.—I clearly see that, to ask our friend of the Brethren church, to come over to single immersion is de-

manding something of him that he cannot accept. But when he urges us to accept trine immersion, he is pleading for a practice that not only he, but we, also, believe to be valid. The fact of the matter is, single immersion is not common ground.

EPISCOPALIAN.—Common ground in baptism is the method that we all admit to be valid, and this cannot be said of either sprinkling, pouring or single immersion. On these three, or either one of them, we cannot all agree; we do not all admit either to be valid. Not so with trine immersion; not one of us feels disposed to question its validity.

DISCIPLE.—I am not yet ready to give up Paul's one baptism.

BRETHREN.—We are not asking you to give up Paul's one baptism. You seem to be of the impression that this one baptism was single immersion, when the fact of the matter is, single immersion was not invented till three hundred years after the death of Paul. As before stated, this language has reference to the one ordinance of baptism then in use, and not to the number of actions constituting that ordinance. As in the Trinity there are three persons, so in baptism there are three actions. As the three persons of the Trinity are one, so also are the three actions in baptism one. When we accept trine immersion, we accept but one baptism, composed of three actions, the same as accepting the Trinity composed of three persons.

CHRISTIAN.—I am fully convinced that trine immersion is the only common ground in baptism among us. This much seems quite clear. But, on the other hand, it would seem to me that a burial can be sufficiently well represented by one action.

BRETHREN.—An immersion into the name of the undying Father cannot represent the death of his Son, who was laid in Joseph's tomb. For how can undying immortality represent the death of him that died? And if an immersion in-

to the name of the Father cannot represent the death of his Son, there must, of necessity, be another immersion in order to be "planted together in the likeness of Christ's death." This, to my mind, evidences that single immersion cannot be regarded as Christian baptism, and will, therefore, not serve as the only basis of union among us.

DISCIPLE.—I propose that we adjourn, and hold our next meeting at this place in six weeks. I am much interested in the subject, and desire to give it a more thorough examination before speaking further.

CHAPTER VI.

Proceedings and Result of the Last Meeting by the Leading Members of the Several Denominations held in Uniontown.

CHRISTIAN.—I am astonished at the results of our deliberations on this subject. Our present impressions in favor of trine immersion are much stronger than when we first commenced our investigations. It does seem to me that the only fate awaiting us is a change in our practice. This thing of changing is much against my nature. I have an aversion to it and had about made up my mind to never do anything of the kind. But when I consider the old saying, "Wise men sometimes change, but fools never do," I am much better reconciled to the fate that awaits us. Change or no change, I have fully made up my mind to be on the right side of the question.

EPISCOPALIAN.—There is no person in this meeting who is more opposed to changing than myself. I have long been wedded to our practice; my prejudices are wholly in its favor, and if I must change my manner of baptizing it will be with much regret that I do so.

LUTHERAN.—I see one great trouble ahead. If we all commence changing, there is no telling where we will stop. It will be truly said of us that we are blown about by every wind of doctrine. If we now adopt trine immersion as the only method to be used in our practice, for aught we know another method may turn up in a few years, and then we will want to change again.

EPISCOPALIAN.—If I understand the matter fairly, we are to go back beyond the origin of all other methods, save trine immersion, for our model of practice. On investigating the subject, I discover that sprinkling and pouring, as baptism, have found their origin since the middle of the third century, and did not become anything like general till after the fifteenth. Their validity has always been in dispute by some of the best and wisest men in Christendom, while the practice has been wholly repudiated by many of the most respectable denominations of ancient and modern times. Single immersion, I also learn from authentic sources, was invented by Eunomius, in the latter part of the fourth century. This position is affirmed by both Theodoret and Sozomen, able and learned ecclesiastical writers, who were very near contemporary with Eunomius, and the same is also stated by Dr. Wall and Bingham, two of the ablest writers of modern times. The practice, though sanctioned by the Fourth Council of Toledo, in the seventh century, did not become very general till after the Reformation. Like sprinkling and pouring, its validity has always been the subject of much dispute, while some of the wisest and best Christians of antiquity have written against it. In very early times, all the churches that held to the apostolic order, refused to practice or admit its validity. It was many hundred years before any of the churches planted by the apostles could be prevailed upon to practice it. In the parts of the country where Christianity was first introduced, it was more than a thousand years before single immersion found any

favor among the people. The eastern part of Christendom, in whose mother tongue the New Testament was first written, and the Gentiles to whom the Gospel was first preached, to this day repudiate single immersion. Brethren, here is an array of facts that form an unsurmountable difficulty in the way of sprinkling, pouring, or single immersion. These practices have all been in dispute since the day of their introduction. But if we go back beyond the origin of these, we get a method that has always been admitted to be valid. We have a method that reaches back beyond the origin of all others. When we select this as the basis of our union in baptism, we get the oldest practice in existence, and need not be alarmed about finding an older method to turn us away from this.

BAPTIST.—During further investigations of this subject, I find some puzzling matters. Like Bro. Episcopalian, when I come to investigate the practice of the early churches, I find that single immersion has always been more or less in dispute. Its validity has been called in question by some of the brightest luminaries of the grand constellation of Christianity, while, as a practice, it has been repudiated by the oldest denominations in Christendom. Furthermore, we know that it prevailed to only a limited extent prior to the Reformation, and, during the first three centuries of the Christian era, it was wholly unknown. With the deepest feelings of regret I state these facts, though they are against the faith and practice of the Baptist church. My heart has been wrung with pain, made by the arrows of truth, while investigating this subject. For many long years we have been proud, and boasted much of our organic connection with the apostolic church. We have written large volumes, trying to prove to the world that the Baptist church has a regular line and order of descent from the church organized by the apostles themselves; but, much to my great disappointment, I discover that in endeavoring

to establish this connection, we invariably run our line of descent through old churches, all of whom rejected single and practiced trine immersion. This one fact destroys all our claims to organic connection with the apostolic churches. I clearly see that if we adopt single immersion as the ground of our union in baptism, we sanction a method that was repudiated by those ancient churches that held an undoubted organic connection with the congregations planted by the apostles, a method that always has been in dispute, and never was, at any one period, the general practice of Christendom. We thereby would reject trine immersion, a method whose origin is hid in the remote depths of Christian antiquity, and which, during the first five centuries of the Christian era, was the general practice of all Christendom, a method that was, at one time, the practice of every denomination now in existence that holds any just claims to antiquity; in short it is a method that all the leading denominations of the day admit to be valid baptism. I have one more thought that rests with considerable weight upon my mind, that I wish to present before taking my seat. It has been seen that trine immersion was the prevailing practice of all Christendom during the early ages of Christianity; that it was practiced by all the old churches; that its validity has never been called in question by men of note, and its validity is admitted by all leading denominations of the present time. Now does it seem reasonable that all of this could be truthfully said of a method that is not Scriptural? If trine immersion is not the method taught in the great commission, in what way are we able to account for all those favorable facts which I have just mentioned? And, furthermore, if single immersion is the Scriptural method, how does it happen that it has always been a practice of dispute? Why was it rejected by the old churches? Does it seem reasonable that we would all agree in the wrong method as being valid, and only a part favor the right method? After

mature deliberation, I firmly believe that trine immersion is the only ground of union in baptism on which we can unite. When we get this method, then we will have a baptism that is a little like gold,—it will pass anywhere.

METHODIST.—The strongest impression made on my mind, so far, is that trine immersion holds the same superiority over single immersion that immersion holds over sprinkling. As an illustration, those who have been immersed and live in a church that holds that practice to be the only valid method, can pass from that church to those that sprinkle, and their baptism is considered valid by the latter. But those who are sprinkled, and live in a church that holds to that method, cannot pass with their sprinkling to the church that holds immersion to be the only Scriptural baptism. It will be seen that sprinkling is sanctioned by but one body, while immersion is admitted to be valid by both parties. This proves to me that immersion must certainly be right. But we pass one step further; the man who has been dipped three times in baptism, and belongs to a church that holds to that method, can pass over to a church that holds to single immersion, and his baptism will be acknowledged valid by the latter; but one who has been baptized by single immersion cannot pass to the church that holds to trine immersion. Here it will be seen that but one party believes single immersion to be valid while the validity of trine immersion is acknowledged by both. This proves to me that trine immersion is the right method; or if it is not, why do both parties accept it? There seem to be three grades in what we call baptism, the highest of which is trine immersion. It will pass among those who hold to either sprinkling or single immersion, but neither of the latter will pass among those who hold to trine immersion.

I may more forcibly illustrate my meaning by the following: Suppose we had before us three ten-dollar bills, two of which are questioned. After a careful examination

of them, there is one of the bills that we are all willing to accept as genuine; about the other two we have our doubts. Now, then, which would you prefer, one of those in question or the one on which we all agree? Now for the application. We dispute about the validity of sprinkling and single immersion, but we all agree that trine immersion is valid. I want the baptism about whose validity there is no question; then we will have something, as the brother said, that is like gold,—it will pass anywhere.

CHRISTIAN.—I consent to do my part in trying to effect a union in our method of baptizing, having no idea that this investigation would lead us where it has. But I must confess that the conclusions reached are the logical consequences resulting from a proper investigation of the subject. It has been clearly shown that neither sprinkling nor pouring could be accepted as the basis of our union, as they are in dispute among us. Immersion, however, has been shown to be common ground, and believed to be valid by all parties. But the same arguments that were used in defense of immersion have been logically turned against single immersion and it is now quite conclusively shown that trine immersion is really the only common ground of union to be found in all our practices. I see no way by which this can be avoided. That the validity of trine immersion is undisputed is clear to all our minds. I am ready to unite upon it, but before taking my seat I want to present one of my strongest reasons for so doing. That God wants his people to be one in faith and practice is a doctrine that runs through the entire Gospel, and I believe that this union was quite general among them during the apostolic age; but since that time, Christendom, by internal commotions and discords, has been divided into nearly a thousand fragments. During this time, various methods of baptizing have found their way among us. It is our duty to be united here and have but one method of baptizing, as was evidently the case among

the apostles and early Christians. In looking over all the different methods before us, we find one in which we all agree, *i. e.*, we admit it to be valid, and it is the only method of antiquity about which there is no controversy. As the Bible teaches but one method, and God wants us to be united on that method, does it not seem conclusive that a method we all unintentionally agree to be valid, a method that is accepted by all leading denominations; a method whose validity was never in dispute among any of the ancient churches, should be the method taught in the Gospel? Does it seem reasonable that there could be such an agreement on anything but the right method? It seems to me that the united voice of all Christendom, and the general consent of the leading denominations of the present time, are sufficient to show to us that there is more in it than the work of mere man. Certainly, nothing but a divinely-appointed method could command such a united respect as has been conferred upon trine immersion by both ancient and modern Christendom.

DISCIPLE.—Since our last meeting, I have studied this matter more thoroughly than ever before. I stood up persistently in the defense of single immersion till I was defeated, in part at least, by the very arguments that I had so successfully used against sprinkling and pouring. What puzzled me most was that our church admitted trine immersion to be valid; in short we all admitted that, showing conclusively that it was common ground. But on the other hand all were not willing to accept single immersion, showing that it was not common ground. I was compelled to either admit that we sanction an unlawful method of baptizing when we accepted trine immersion, or give up single immersion. I saw if the latter method was to be retained, it would be impossible to unite in our method of baptizing, thus leaving matters in as bad a state as before. I then came to the same conclusion as did our Bro. Christian, that nothing but a divinely-

authorized institution could command such respect as has been conferred upon trine immersion by all denominations of ancient and modern times. Since fully making up my mind that trine immersion is the only ground of union in baptism, I see in it many beauties of which I never before thought. Allow me, before taking my seat, to enumerate a few of them, and show their harmony with trine immersion.

The essential elements of the Christian religion are presented to us as a series of trinities, a succession of groups, composed of three forming a unit of a higher order. We recognize trinities in almost everything we behold, both in nature and revelation. The *sun, moon and earth, the land, water and air*, are familiar to all eyes. The earth is composed of three kingdoms,—the *mineral, vegetable and animal*. There are *three* in heaven that bear record. These three are one composing a unit of a higher order; just so with baptism, there are three actions composing the one ordinance. With all this agrees even man, composed of *soul, body and spirit*. The Godhead is revealed to us under three names and persons,—the *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. Christ lay *three* days in the grave. While suffering in the garden he bowed *three* times. Three fundamental facts are inseparable from Christ,—his *death, burial and resurrection*. All sinners must do three things in order to pardon,—*believe, repent and be baptized*. When baptized, we have the promise of three things: *Remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of eternal life*. *Faith, hope and charity* are another three, without which none can be saved. Thus I might continue to name the trinities of the Gospel for many minutes, but let this suffice for the present. I see where I made all my mistakes regarding Christian baptism; I was looking at the unit all the time, and not at the three that composed this unit.

METHODIST.—Since we have come to a perfect agreement regarding the action of Christian baptism, we can now

separate with the best of feeling, knowing that we have accomplished a great work.

CHRISTIAN.—And now, since the Lord has enabled us to find this ground of union in baptism, let us pray him that in all things we may be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Therefore, before we separate, let us sing together the beautiful lines:

Lo! what an entertaining sight
Are brethren that agree!
Brethren whose cheerful hearts unite
In bands of piety.

When streams of love, from Christ the spring,
Descend to ev'ry soul,
And heavenly peace with balmy wing
Shades and bedews the whole.

'Tis like the oil divinely sweet,
On Aaron's rev'rend head;
The trickling drops perfumed his feet
And o'er his garments spread.

'Tis pleasant as the morning dews
That fall on Zion's hill,
Where God his mildest glory shows,
And makes his grace distill.

